



National Indian Health Board
**NATIONAL TRIBAL
 COVID-19 RESPONSE**

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Herd Immunity and Tribal Communities

Herd immunity, sometimes called community immunity, occurs when a large percentage of the population is immune to a disease. This immunity can happen through vaccination and/or prior illness thus making the spread of the infectious disease from person to person unlikely. For example, if 80% of your Tribal community is immune to a virus, 4 out of every 5 Tribal citizens who encounter someone in your community with the disease will not get sick or spread the disease any further. Even Tribal citizens not vaccinated (such as newborns and the immunocompromised) are offered some protection because the disease has little opportunity to spread within the Tribal community. For more information about how to protect your Tribal community please visit the [National Indian Health Board COVID-19 Tribal Resource Center](#).

How Does Herd Immunity Work?



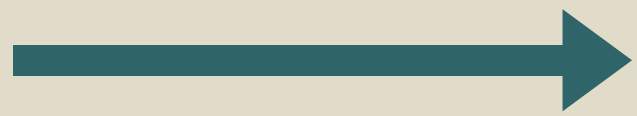
Not immunized but healthy



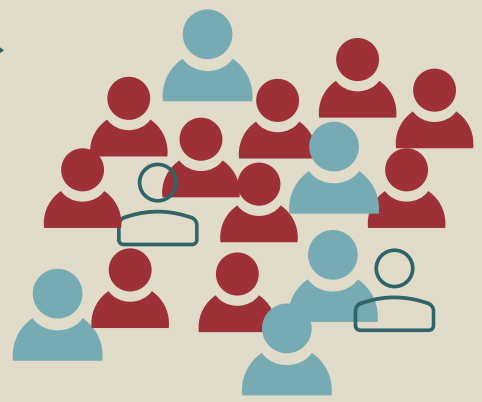
Immunized and healthy

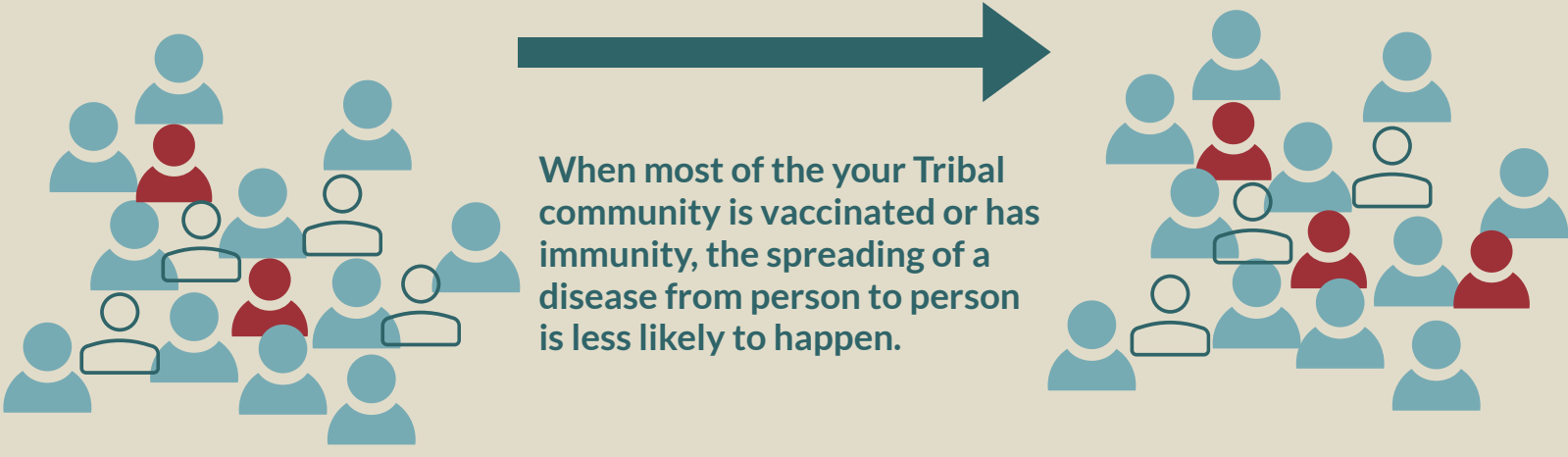


Not immunized and sick



A low number of vaccinated people in a Tribal community and/or low immunity from prior illness can lead to a disease easily spreading from person to person in the community.

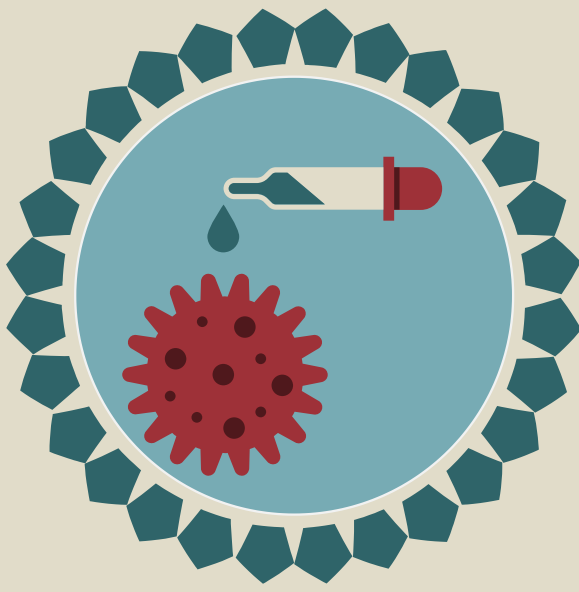




Why Build Herd Immunity?

Herd immunity can protect the most vulnerable members of your Tribal community. Vulnerable Tribal citizens include elders, babies who have not received vaccines, pregnant women, and those who are not able to receive a vaccine such as people who have had an organ transplant or are receiving chemotherapy. If enough people in your community are vaccinated or have immunity against diseases, individuals who are at higher risk and cannot get vaccinated have some protection against infection.

Herd Immunity, COVID-19, and Tribal Communities



What Are We Still Learning?

- How long COVID-19 vaccines will protect people.
- How well the COVID-19 vaccines prevent you from spreading the virus to other people in your Tribal community.
- How effective the vaccines are against new variants or strains of the virus that causes COVID-19.
- How many people will have to be vaccinated against COVID-19 before a population is considered protected.

What Will it Take to Achieve Herd Immunity?

Information about the coronavirus suggests that at least 70% of the population will need to be immune or vaccinated to keep the rate of infection down without restrictions, such as curfews, stay-at-home orders, or closing the borders of Tribal lands. A number of factors can impact reaching 70%, including how contagious the virus and the variants are and how members of your community interact. Physical distancing and wearing a mask can help slow the spread of infection. As Tribal communities work to vaccinate their citizens follow guidelines issued by your Tribe when gathering for traditional ceremonies, pow-wows, drum circles, and other large or small gatherings you may attend.

COVID-19 vaccines are an important tool to help protect Tribal communities and help bring you closer to enjoying family and friends.



For more information, or to learn more about frequently asked questions, visit the [CDC website](#).
[What is Herd Immunity and How Can We Achieve It With COVID-19?](#)
[Key Things to Know about COVID-19 Vaccines](#)



Disclaimer: This fact sheet is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$2,000,000 with 100 percent funded by CDC/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

For more information, visit NIHB's National Tribal COVID-19 Response page at www.nihb.org